

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 190303

71

ORIGIN SS-14

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 ISO-00 /016 R

66610

DRAFTED BY: S/S-O:JSNYDER

APPROVED BY: S/S-O:WNEWLIN

DISTRIBUTION: NONE INDICATED

----- 051947

P 250136Z SEP 73 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 190303

TOSEC 24

FOLLOWING REPEAT PHNOM PENH 10240 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
SECDEF CJCS COMUSSAG CINCPAC BANGKOK SAIGON USUN PARIS
24 SEPT

QUOTE

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 10240

E.M. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE OF KOMPONG CHAM--A PRELIMINARY
BALANCE SHEET

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE WEEKS BEFORE FINAL COUNT
IS IN, OUR PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT IS THAT THE BATTLE OF
KOMPONG CHAM WAS ABOUT A DRAW ON THE MILITARY SIDE, A
LOSS FOR THE GKR IN TERMS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIS-
LOCATION AND A CLEAR VICTORY FOR FANK PSYCHOLOGICALLY.
THE TWO SIDES SEEM TO HAVE SACRIFICED ROUGHLY EQUAL
NUMBERS OF MAIN FORCE TROOPS ALTHOUGH THE KI MAY FIND IT
EASIER TO RECOUP THEIR PERSONNEL LOSSES. THE GKR LOST A GOOD
PART OF THE CITY'S POPULATION AND ITS PRODUCTIVE
CAPACITY, WHICH WILL LEAVE KOMPONG CHAM SMALLER AND
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 190303

POORER THAN IT WAS BEFORE. THE BIG STAKES AT KOMPONG
CHAM WERE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL, HOWEVER, AND ANY
DOUBTS THAT THE VKR CAME OUT WELL AHEAD IN THIS RESPECT
SHOULD BE DISSPELLED BY THE SOMEWHAT FRANTIC COVER-UP

PROPAGANDA TO WHICH GRUNK/FUNK IS NOW RESORTING. END SUMMARY.

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL GAINS. THE STAKES AT KOMPONG CHAM WERE FROM THE OUTSET PRIMARILY POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL. THEY WERE SET BY THE KI, WHO BADLY NEEDED A CLEAR-CUT, MAJOR VICTORY TO REGAIN MOMENTUM LOST IN THE OFFENSIVE AROUND PHNOM PENH AND WHO WERE ALSO ANXIOUS TO OBTAIN AN ADDITIONAL BOOST FOR THEIR CREDENTIALS BATTLE AT THE UNITED NATIONS. THE KI APPARENTLY PLACED THESE STAKES ON KOMPONG CHAM BECAUSE IT IS ONE OF CAMBODIA'S BETTER KNOWN LOCALITIES BOTH HOME AND ABROAD, IT IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE CAREERS OF SEVERAL GKR LEADERS, IT IS CLOSE TO THE KI AND FAR FROM THE FANK SOURCES OF SUPPLY, AND THE FIRST MILITARY REGION'S RECORD ON ROUTE 7 PROMISED INEFFECTIVE OPPOSITION.

A. PSYCHOLOGICALLY, THE KI WOULD SEEM AT THIS POINT TO HAVE LOST MORE THAN THEY REALLY INTENDED TO RISK. NOT ONLY DID THEY FAIL TO LIVE UP TO THEIR LONG AND LOUD BOASTING BUT THEY LEFT BEHIND AT KOMPONG CHAM RATHER TELLING EVIDENCE AGAINST THEIR CLAIM TO BE LIBERATORS. (ALTHOUGH THE U.S. PRESS HAS YET TO FOCUS ON THIS ASPECT OF THE BATTLE, WE HAVE EYEWITNESS REPORTS OF THE EXECUTION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, THE KILLING OF HOSPITAL PATIENTS, THE DEFROCKING OF MONKS; ETC., IN ADDITION TO THE WANTON DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY BY THE ATTACK ITSELF.) ALSO NOTEWORTHY IN THIS CONNECTION IS THAT, AS IN 1970, A NUMBER OF STUDENTS VOLUNTARILY JOINED IN THE DEFENSE OF THE CITY.

B. THE UNK/GRUNK THEMSELVES CONSIDERED KOMPONG CHAM A PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEAT IS EVIDENCED BY THEIR ENERGETIC BUT VISIBLY DESPERATE COVER-UP PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. NOT ONLY HAS SIHANOUK FELT IT NECESSARY TO REVISE HIS VICTORY TIMETABLE AND TO COMPLAIN THAT THE KI HAD BEEN CUT OFF FROM OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE WHILE FANK CONTINUED TO SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 190303

RECEIVE U.S. AID, BUT THE KI HAVE NOW RESORTED TO THE BIG LIE, ALLEGING THAT U.S. AIRCRAFT HAD AN IMPORTANT AND BRUTAL ROLE IN KOMPONG CHAM'S DEFENSE.

C. SOME QUALIFICATIONS MUST, OF COURSE, BE PLACED ON FANK'S PSYCHOLOGICAL VICTORY. A FEW KHMER, ESPECIALLY DISGRUNTLED PHNOM PENH STUDENTS, HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE ARMY DID NOT PREVENT THE KI FROM CARRYING OFF A GREAT PORTION OF THE CITY'S POPULATION AND THE HUMAN COSTS OF THE BATTLE IN TERMS OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES AND REFUGEES HAVE BEEN WIDELY VISIBLE. ALSO, SOME FANK UNITS APPEAR TO HAVE ENGAGED IN SMALL SCALE LOOTING AND PROFITEERING. ON BALANCE, HOWEVER, FANK SHOWED THE NATION AND ITSELF THAT IT COULD

RESPOND FORCEFULLY TO A MAJOR THREAT AT THE PERIPHERY OF ITS TERRITORY AND THAT IT COULD FIGHT WITH ITS BACK AGAINST THE WALL. A DEMONSTRATION OF THIS SORT WAS BADLY NEEDED.

D. THE MOST STRIKING PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF KOMPONG CHAM TO DATE HAVE BEEN PERHAPS ON MILITARY MORALE. THE NAVY IN PARTICULAR IS RIGHTFULLY PROUD OF ITSELF. ITS NEW CONFIDENCE, WHICH WAS MOST RECENTLY EVIDENCED IN THE PREY VENG OPERATION, SHOWS SOME SIGN IN FACT OF EXCEEDING PROPER BOUNDS AS NAVY LEADERS NOW SPEAK OF SAILING TO KRATIE. THE ARMY TOO HAS BEEN GIVEN A BOOST, AND WE ARE TEMPTED TO ATTRIBUTE THE RECENT OPENING OF ROUTES 1 AND 4 IN SOME DEGREE TO A DESIRE NOT TO BE OUT-DONE BY THE KOMPONG CHAM BRIGADES. MOST IMPORTANT, PERHAPS, THE SUCCESSFUL JOINT NAVY-AIRFORCE-ARMY OPERATION AT KOMPONG CHAM HAS STRENGTHENED HERETOFORE WEAK INTER-SERVICE BONDS.

E. WE NOW HAVE CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT KOMPONG CHAM HAS HAD REVERSE EFFECTS ON ENEMY MORALE AND ATTITUDES. SEVERAL RELIABLE SOURCES HAVE REPORTED KI FEUDS WITH THEIR VIETNAMESE ALLIES AND THE UNWILLINGNESS OF KI UNITS BORROWED FROM OTHER REGIONS TO REMAIN. THE TONE OF SIHANOUK'S RECENT STATEMENTS ALSO CAN BE TAKEN AS AN INDICATION THAT THIS MORALE PROBLEM HAS RISEN TO THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVELS.

3. MILITARY LOSSES. AS KOMPONG CHAM HAS LITTLE STRATEGIC
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 190303

IMPORTANT FOR THE ENEMY, THE MILITARY STAKES WERE PRIMARILY THE FORCES COMMITTED TO THE BATTLE. AFTER SUBSTANTIAL INITIAL LOSSES OF TERRITORIAL TROOPS FANK RAISED THESE STAKES TO THE POINT THAT A DEFEAT AND DISORGANIZED WITHDRAWAL WOULD HAVE BROUGHT INTO QUESTION ITS ABILITY TO REMAIN THE THE GAME. THIS GAMBLE PAID OFF AND, AS OF TODAY, WE ESTIMATE MILITARY LOSSES TO BE AT LEAST BALANCED AND PERHAPS IN FANK'S FAVOR ALTHOUGH THE KI IS IN A MUCH BETTER POSITION TO RECOUP PERSONNEL LOSSES.

A. NUNERICALLY FANK'S LOSSES WERE GREATEST AMONG THE TERRITORIAL UNITS. WE DO NOT HAVE ACCURATE FIGURES BUT ESTIMATED SOME 1,000 MEN FROM THESE UNITS DISAPPEARED, A FEW OF WHOM WERE KILLED, MANY OF WHO DESERTED AND MOST OF WHOM WERE PROBABLY CAPTURED. MORE MEANINGFUL IN TERMS OF EFFECT ON FANK'S OVERALL STRENGTH WERE CASUALTIES IN THE MAJOR INTERVENTION FORCE UNITS. OF THE 4,675 MEN IN THE FOUR BRIGADES, 215 HAVE THUS FAR BEEN LISTED AS KILLED, 1,320 AS WOUNDED AND 76 AS MISSING. WE BELIEVE THAT OVER 50 PERCENT OF THE WOUNDED HAVE RETURNED OR WILL SOON BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR UNITS. ONE FANK BATTALION COMMANDER WAS KILLED. UNLIKE SOME WESTERN JOURNALISTS, WE WOULD NOT DESCRIBE THESE AS CRITICAL LOSSES

FOR THE GENERAL RESERVE BUT THEY ARE SERIOUS AND THEY DO POINT TO THE NEED FOR A MORE VIGOROUS RECRUITMENT PROGRAM.

B. MR I COMMANDER SAR HOR HAS ESTIMATED KI KILLED IN ACTION AT 2,000 INCLUDING ONE BATTALION COMMANDER. WE HAVE NO MEANS OF VERIFYING HIS ESTIMATED BUT WOULD NOT REJECT A FIGURE OF THIS MAGNITUDE FOR THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ENEMY TROOPS PUT OUT OF ACTION.

C. EQUIPMENT LOSSES WERE, AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, IN THE KI'S FAVOR BUT NOT MARKEDLY SO. FANK LOST ONE AU-24 STALLION GUNSHIP DESTROYED, THREE 105MM HOWITZERS BADLY DAMAGED AND NINE ANCIENT ARMORED CARS (ALL EITHER BELIEVED MARGINALLY OPERATIVE OR INOPERATIVE). FANK CAPTURED 115 ASSORTED WEAPONS INCLUDING EIGHT CREW-SERVICED WEAPONS, AND DESTROYED ONE OF THE FOUR 105 MM HOWITZERS BELIEVED TO BE IN THE ENEMY'S POSSESSION.

D. WHILE THE OVERALL FIGURES SEEM TO BE SLIGHTLY IN FANK'S FAVOR, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE KI IS IN A BETTER POSITION TO RECOUP ITS PERSONNEL LOSSES OVER
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 190303

THE LONGER TERM. INDEED, ITS INITIAL PENETRATION INTO KOMPONG CHAM ALLOWED IT TO ROUND UP PROBABLY TWICE THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE MALE CIVILIANS THAN THE MILITARY IT LOST.

4. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS. IT IS AS YET IMPOSSIBLE TO QUANTIFY ACCURATELY THE SOCIAL DISLOCATION AND ECONOMIC DESTRUCTION CASUED BY THE BATTLE OF KOMPONG CHAM BUT WE CAN SAFELY SAY THE FIGURES WILL BE HIGH.

A. UP TP 30 OR 40 THOUSAND CIVILIANS WERE ABDUCTED. SEVERAL SOURCES TELL US THAT THEY WERE RAPIDLY SEPARATED INTO GROUPS WITH YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN SENT TO THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG FOR INDOCTRINATION AND MILITARY TRAINING, MONKS EITHER DEFROCKED AND INTEGRATED INTO THE MILITARY TRAINING CADRES OR PLACED IN PAGODAS IN THE ENEMY ZONE, AND OLD MEN AND WOMEN RELEASED TO RETURN TO KOMPONG CHAM. PSYCHOLOGICAL COSTS ASIDE, THIS ACQUISITION OF HUMAN RESOURCES WOULD JUSTIFY THE ENEMY'S OUTLAY IN THIS BATTLE.

B. KOMPONG CHAM'S CIVIL ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN LEFT IN SHAMBLES. OF 100 CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, FOR EXAMPEL, ONLY ONE, THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR, WAS PRESENT FOR DUTY ON SEPTEMBER 21.

SIXTY WERE REPORTEDLY CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY, 20 FLED TO PHNOM PENH AND THE REMAINDER WERE AFRAID TO VENTURE TO THEIR OFFICES BECAUSE OF SHELLING. OF 200 SECONDARY TEACHERS ABOUT 145 CAN CURRENTLY BE ACCOUNTED FOR AND 1200 OF THE 2000 ELEMENTARY TEACHERS ARE MISSING. THE ENTIRE STAFF OF DOCTORS IN THE CIVILIAN HOSPITAL DISAPPEARED AND IS NOT YET ACCOUNTED FOR.

C. THE BATTLE OF KOMPONG CHAM HAS ADDED ABOUT 7,500

PEOPLE TO PHNOM PENH'S ALREADY ENORMOUS REFUGEE POPULATION. THIS NUMBER WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH GREATER HAD THE FIRST MILITARY REGION COMMANDER NOT RESTRICTED PERMISSION TO LEAVE LARGELY TO MILITARY AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT DEPENDENTS. ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN KOMPONG CHAM RANGE FROM 25,000 TO 40,000 BUT OFFICIALS AS YET ADMIT THEY HAVE ONLY VAGUE IDEAS OF THE POPULATION REMAINING IN THE CITY (ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE PLANS FOR A CENSUS). VIRTUALLY ALL THE REMAINING POPULATION ARE LIVING AT THE MOMENT IN REFUGEE-LIKE CONDITIONS AS THEY
SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 190303

ARE CRAMMED INTO WATERFRONT BUILDINGS (UP TO TEN FAMILIES IN A SINGLE APARTMENT) TO ESCAPE SHELLINGS. THIS PROBLEM WILL BE GREATLY ALLEVIATED, OF COURSE, IF FANK FORCES ARE ABLE TO EXPAND THE DEFENSE PERIMETER AND FAMILIES ARE ALLOWED TO MOVE INTO NOW DESERTED QUARTERS OF THE CITY.

D. INITIAL ECONOMIC DISLOCATION HAS, OF COURSE, BEEN SEVERE. ALTHOUGH SUFFICIENT RICE EXISTS IN GOVERNMENT STOCKS (ABOUT 540 TONS ON SEPTEMBER 21) TO FEED THE CITY FOR ABOUT A MONTH, MONEY TO PURCHASE IT WITH IS REPORTEDLY SCARCE. ONLY 40 TONS HAVE BEEN SET ASIDE FOR DISTRIBUTION TO REFUGEES. VEGETABLES, USUALLY PLENTIFUL IN KOMPONG CHAM, ARE NOW IN VERY SHORT SUPPLY BUT WILL PROBABLY RETURN TO THE MARKET IF FANK FORCES ARE ABLE TO EXTEND THEIR PERIMETER ALONG THE BANKS OF THE MEKONG AND LAKES. IN SUM, THE PROBLEM OF FEEDING, HOUSING AND CARING FOR THE REMAINING POPULATION OF KOMPONG CHAM IS GREAT BUT CAN BE SURMOUNTED IF AND WHEN THE PERIMETER IS ENLARGED, VOLUNTARY AGENCIES' PROGRAMS GET UNDERWAY AND THE GKR HAS GOT ITS ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANS BACK INTO WORKING ORDER.

E. THE PERMANENT ECONOMIC COSTS OF THE BATTLE OF KOMPONG CHAM ARE MOST DIFFICULT TO MEASURE. WE DO NOT YET KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE DAMAGE TO THE TEXTILE PLANT, THE LARGEST OF CAMBODIA'S THREE. IF IT CANNOT BE BROUGHT BACK INTO OPERATION, HOWEVER, THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY WILL NOT ONLY HAVE LOST THE OUTPUT OF THIS PLANT BUT THE PRODUCTION OF THE OTHER FACTORIES IN PHNOM PENH AND BATTAMBANG WILL BE REDUCED FOR LACK OF SPECIALIZED PRODUCTS PRODUCED ONLY AT KOMPONG CHAM. WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO MAKE AN ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE TO THE CITY'S BASIC SERVICES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF BRINGING THEM BACK TO PRE-ATTACK LEVEL. IF FANK FORCES ARE ABLE TO EXTEND THEIR PERIMETER TO THE POINTS NOW ENVISAGED (AT BEST A 10-12 KM SEMI-CIRCLE CENTERED ON TOWN-AT WORST AN ARC ENCOMPASSING THE AIRFIELD)--AND WE BELIEVE THEIR CHANCES OF DOING SO ARE GOOD--THE LONG TERM PROSPECTS FOR FEEDING THE CITY WILL NOT BE BAD. CONSIDERING THE LOSS OF POPULATION, IMPORTS OF

RICE WOULD IN THIS CONTINGENCY PROBABLY NOT EXCEED
SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 190303

PRE-ATTACK LEVELS.
F. IN SHORT, KOMPONG CHAM WILL UNDER THE BEST CONDITIONS
BE A MUCH SMALLER AND POORER CITY THAN IT WAS BEFORE.
WE BELIEVE IT WILL BE A PROUD ONE, HOWEVER, AND AN
IMPORTANT SYMBOL OF THE NATIONS'S WILL TO RESIST.
ENDERS
UNQUOTE RUSH

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: collinp0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE190303
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/S-O:JSNYDER
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730963/abqceirp.tel
Line Count: 285
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: collinp0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Oct-2001 by thigpegh>; APPROVED <04 MAR 2002 by collinp0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE OF KOMPONG CHAM--A PRELIMINARY BALANCE SHEET
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, CB
To: USUN N Y
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005